

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Reply, claims 1-45 and 57-61 will remain in this application. Non-elected claims 46-56 and 62 have been cancelled. New claims 63-66 have been added. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings set forth in section 2 on page 2 of the Office Action will be in order in view of the drawing change submitted together with this Reply. The amended drawing sheet appended to this Reply includes the change to Figure 1E referred to by the Examiner.

The informalities referred to in section 3 on page 2 of the Office Action have been eliminated.

The title has been amended above in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

The claim amendments set forth above were made after consideration of the comments provided by the Examiner in section 6 on pages 3-6 of the Office Action. With respect to the Examiner's comments concerning claims 34, 35, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, and 45, 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, does not require the provision of additional structural limitations in dependent claims. It is respectfully submitted that all of the claims remaining in this application fully comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Claims 3, 13, and 26 have been rewritten above in the manner referred to by the Examiner in section 14 on page 15 of the Office Action and should now be allowable. It is to be noted that neither original claim 3 nor original claim 1, upon which original claim 3 depended, was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a) set forth by the Examiner in sections 8, 9, and 11-13 of the Office Action is requested. Each of independent claims 1, 7, 20, and 57 as amended above recites that the system, anode assembly, or apparatus according to the present invention as specified includes a conductive mesh (claim 1) or element (claims 7, 20, and 57) having a plurality of active regions defined by mask openings. No such system, anode assembly, or apparatus is disclosed by U.S. Patent 4,678,545 to Galik, U.S. Patent 4,643,816 to Geels, U.S. Patent 6,132,583 to Stone, U.S. Patent 6,106,687 to Edelstein, or any of the other patent documents relied on by the Examiner. It is to be particularly noted that, in the method forming the subject matter of the Galik patent, both sides of a workpiece are plated. The mask referred to is an insulation layer, with holes, and the mask is on the substrate. Moreover, in the Geels configuration, no potential is applied to the screens 35, 35', and, on each side of the cathode-workpiece 18, only one opening is provided. None of the disclosures relied on by the Examiner suggests a plurality of active regions by which an electroplated layer thickness uniformity can be controlled. It is respectfully submitted that each of claims 1, 7, 20, and 57 appearing above is patentable in its present form. Dependent claims 2, 4-6, 8-12, 14-19, 21-25, 27-45, and 58-61 are patentable as well. All claims remaining in this application, therefore, are now patentable.

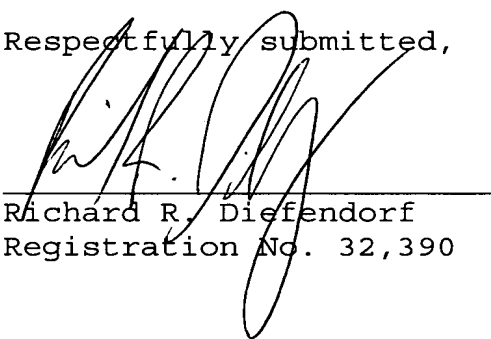
Claim 2 and new claims 63-66, moreover, are patentable separately from the respective claims on which they depend. Although the comments provided by the Examiner in section 12

on pages 11-12 of the Office Action have been noted, in the Geels electroplating apparatus, it is the provision of the false anode 35 per se that makes the current between this false anode and the cathode-workpiece 18 more uniform. The Geels et al. patent disclosure does not suggest attaching a conductive mesh or element to a mask in the context of any structure which could result from combining the Stone and Edelstein disclosures as proposed by the Examiner.

This application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this Reply, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

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Respectfully submitted,



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